

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-11, 14-25 and 27 are pending in the application, wherein claim 1 has been amended, claims 4 and 26 have been cancelled, and new claim 27 has been added. The claims as now presented are believed to place the application in condition for allowance. The amendment does not raise any new issues and is suitable for entry after final rejection under Rule 116.

The Office Action indicates that claims 17-25 are allowed and that claims 4-7, 11 and 16 are merely objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 4 has been incorporated into claim 1, thereby effectively rewriting this claim in independent form. As a result, claim 1 is now allowable over the art of record, as are claims 2, 4-10 and 12-16 which depend from claim 1.

Claim 16 was also rewritten in independent form as new claim 27, which is allowable over the art of record.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, or that may be overcome by examiner amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 19th day of March 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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